



# Inside Region IV

Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee  
Edition 2, Volume 3 Summer 2004

## For and about SBA in Region IV

### Message from the Regional Administrator

Women are starting businesses at an amazing rate. In fact, almost twice as many women are launching new enterprises today as men. Results of a recent study by the non-profit center for Women's Business Research published last month in Forbes Small Business Magazine revealed the astonishing growth rate of women owned firms, validating a widely held belief that women are rapidly achieving parity in the world of small business.



Moreover, these findings illustrate the growing influence of women entrepreneurs on the nation's economy. And even to the most casual observer, they should also reveal a glimpse at SBA's future.

This study, which is highlighted later in the newsletter, discloses a great deal about the changing face of women in business and some possible challenges for SBA if we are to effectively serve this market.

By any measure, we have considerable work ahead. As the typical woman in business evolves and grows, so must our method to getting the message out about all the great things SBA can do to help them succeed.

Let's re-think our standard approaches to reaching our small business customers and develop strategies that truly reflect today's business environment. This is a great opportunity to bring a fresh approach to the way we do business.

*Nuby*

### Georgia Businesswoman is National Small Business Person of the Year

When you talk about quality childcare in Georgia, it's hard not to mention Sheree Mitchell in the same conversation.

Sheree began Growing Room, Inc. in 1989 when she used a U.S. Small Business Administration 504 development loan to build her first child development center in Columbus. She added 20 employees during the next two years as the center filled and a waiting list developed.

By 1992, Sheree realized that she needed more space and built a \$400,000 addition, adding 12 more to her staff to handle the expanding business. In 1996, a second Growing Room opened in North Columbus in a newly constructed 11,500 square-foot facility, creating 32 new jobs. Three years later, she obtained a contract for the Columbus Regional Healthcare Systems' on-site childcare center, adding 15 more employees. In 2002, Growing Room was awarded the contract for two on-site childcare centers at the headquarters of Columbus based AFLAC.

In addition to being a recognized expert in the childcare industry, Sheree, and her Growing Room day-care business, is a phenomenal success, surpassing everyone's expectations. Growing Room, Inc., currently cares for more than 850 children, employs over 170 people, and will generate almost \$4.9 million in revenues this year.



National Small Business Person of the Year Sheree Mitchell with one of her 850 customers

Sheree has also been very active in community service despite the heavy work load generated by her four childcare centers. For many years she has worked with the Columbus, Georgia Chamber of Commerce, one of

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# Study Shows Number of Women Owned Small Businesses Growing And Reveals Misunderstandings about SBA

**Women** are starting more businesses than men – and growing them faster, according to a recent study by the Center for Women's Business Research. Fortune Small Business Magazine reported the study in its June edition.

In its feature "Why Women Rule", Fortune Small Business reported that:

- Women start 424 new enterprises every day, more than twice as many as men.
- Employment at women-owned firms is up 24% over the last seven years, compared to 12% for private companies overall.
- Revenues over the same seven-year period climbed at an average annual rate of 5.6% for women owned companies, vs. 4.8% for all firms.
- According to the report 48% of women who start businesses do so to set their own schedules.



- Another 23% say they started their own business out of frustration with the "glass ceiling" at large companies.

**Fortune attributes** the increase in entrepreneurship among women to higher levels of education and greater corporate experience. Women hold 45% of all professional degrees as compared to 4% in 1965. Today women outnumber men in college enrollment. As for corporate experience, 65% of women launching businesses in the past ten years did so after corporate careers.

But the article also revealed some misunderstandings about SBA lending. First, that SBA backed loans tend to be small - \$25,000 or less. It also depicted our collateral requirements as

Privately-Held, 50% or More Women -Owned Firms 2004					
	% of firms	Number of Firms	Employment	Sales (\$000)	Ranking
<b>U.S. Total</b>	47.7%	10,630,045	19,083,277	2,455,137,953	
<b>Alabama</b>	43.8%	142,063	239,413	26,271,152	28
<b>Florida</b>	48%	716,209	1,012,659	152,346,212	3
<b>Georgia</b>	44.2%	301,582	393,614	55,096,260	12
<b>Kentucky</b>	46.7%	142,228	308,739	35,521,146	24
<b>Mississippi</b>	43.3%	80,343	149,248	19,629,358	36
<b>N Carolina</b>	45.1%	303,661	576,495	71,274,283	9
<b>S Carolina</b>	41/6%	128,447	242,731	29,444,305	27
<b>Tennessee</b>	44.5%	218,894	368,324	46,404,982	18

expressed by one entrepreneur, "they want everything but your first born child as collateral."

The study found that only 11.7% of women surveyed have used SBA backed capital, while 62.3% use non-SBA backed financing. A striking 86.3% of the businesses finance growth from earnings.

Sources: Forbs Small Business Magazine, June 2004  
Center for Women's Business Research

## Transitions

### Tennessee DO

Phil Mahoney – Transferred to Herndon Liquidation Center  
Charles Armstrong - Retired  
Kena Dixon - Promoted to BOS

### Georgia DO

Darlene Milhouse, Promoted to Administrative Officer

### North Carolina

Arline Brex, Marketing & Outreach Specialist, Wilmington, NC  
Anna V. Laguer, BIA Answer Desk, Retired

# Staff Profile

## *Betty Gail Dean's Career is a Testament to the Value of SBA to Alabama Small Businesses*

**Contributed by Karen Cook, PIO Alabama District Office**

It is the love she has for her fellow employees and her belief in the mission of SBA that keeps Alabama's Acting Finance Division Chief Gail Dean at SBA. After 36 years with the Alabama District office, she has been involved in almost every aspect of SBA program delivery in the state.

Gail worked her way up through the ranks by working in all divisions. She started out in Administration and continued on to the Servicing/Processing Divisions; Legal Division; served as a team member to set up the Management Assistance Division; Finance Division; and Disaster Assistance Offices set up throughout the state. She also assisted the District Director on a part-time basis. She was named Acting Chief in the Finance Division in 2003.



Gail was raised in Montevallo, Alabama, attended Montevallo public schools and the University of Montevallo. Her parents and brother still reside there. Today, she lives in Hoover, Alabama, with her German Shepherd, Storm. She inherited Storm when her daughter moved to Maggie Valley, North Carolina, to promote tourism for the local chamber and to join the staff of Wheels Through Time, the All-American Transportation Museum which features one of the country's largest collections of antique motorcycles. Gail attends Dawson Memorial Baptist Church where she has been a member there since 1982. She is an avid golfer and bowler.

Gail is known among SBA staff and partners for her ready smile, friendly personality and willingness to help in almost any situation. She possesses that special talent for working effectively with others, which has garnered the respect of her co-workers, lending partners and the small business community. She has excelled in all that she does at SBA and is an outstanding example of a team player.

"I believe in the mission and the programs of SBA and helping the small business person." Gail says, "Upon retirement, if I ever leave SBA, I plan to travel and put more time into the "hitting of that little evil white ball" – GOLF."

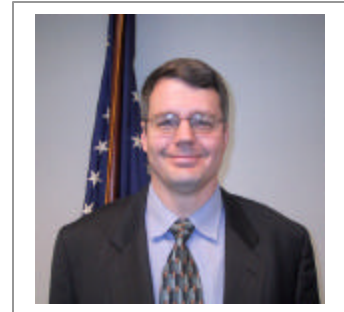
### **MISSISSIPPI DISTRICT AND BRANCH OFFICE RECEIVE AWARDS OF APPRECIATION FROM PARTICIPATING LENDERS & CDC'S**



On June 29, 2004, the Mississippi SBA District and Gulfport Branch Office were presented awards for dedication to serving Mississippi small businesses. The plaques, signed by eleven participating in and out-of-state lenders and Certified Development Companies, were given in appreciation and for professional assistance rendered to the lending and small business communities. District Director Janita R. Stewart received the awards during the 2004 Mississippi Small Business Week Awards Luncheon in Jackson.

## New District Directors in Alabama and Kentucky

Entrepreneur and retired military officer **Michael W. Ricks** has been named Alabama DD. Prior to his appointment, he served as Program Manager for Advanced Technology and Production Readiness for the Marine Corps in Washington DC. He also served as a Defense Acquisition Officer in early Program Concept Development for the Army Infantry Center at Ft. Benning. During his 12 year active duty and reserve military career, he served on numerous overseas combat and hazardous duty deployments. From 2000 – 2002 Mike owned and operated a software development, business process, and information systems consulting company in central Florida.



Alabama DD Mike Ricks

Mike earned a Bachelors Degree in Technology from the University of Houston, and a Masters Degree in Management from Troy State University.



Kentucky DD Steve Ayers

He lived in the Birmingham area for 10 years and attended Homewood High School. He is married to the former Cynthia Comer of Pensacola, Fla. They have twin girls, Lauryn and Alyssa born December 1, 2003.



Kentucky native **Steven R. Ayers** has been named DD in the Kentucky. Prior to joining SBA, he served more than 13 years with the Tennessee Valley Authority in Chattanooga where he served in a number management positions including Senior Manager for Supplier & Distributor Relations in Procurement.

As a member of TVA's Supply Chain Reengineering Team, he played a key role in creating and implementing innovations which have saved TVA more than \$270 million since 1997. While at TVA he was a member of the Minority Economic Development and Corporate Contributions Committees, and the Diversity Council.

His community support activities included volunteer support for a Habitat for Humanity and the Adopt-A-School program. He led a team effort to donate over 2000 surplus computers to more than 125 needy schools throughout the Tennessee Valley.

Steve gained extensive private and international sector experience as an executive with Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC). SAIC is an employee-owned, Fortune 500 company which provides high-tech solutions to world-wide customers in the defense, energy, and environment industry sectors.

Steve holds a Global Masters of Business Administration (GMBA) degree from National University, San Diego, CA, and a BA degree in Social Ecology from the University of California, Irvine. He is a Vietnam veteran and served four years in the United States Marine Corps (1968-72) achieving the rank of Platoon Sergeant. Steve and his wife Carol, reside in Louisville, KY.



## Region IV Company National Winner

Continued from page 1

Georgia's most dynamic chamber organizations. She is currently on a four-year leadership track to chair the chamber. As Michael Gaymon, President and CEO of the Columbus Chamber puts it: "Sheree is a go-to type of person. She will confront the challenges, work to find the solutions and then stay the course until the results are reached."

A registered nurse, Sheree is well-respected within her industry. She has served on the Pre-K Peer Review Committee for the Office of School Readiness, the regulatory body for childcare in Georgia. One of only six people on the statewide committee, Sheree worked to ensure high standards are met in all Georgia Pre-K programs.

In other civic activity, Sheree is active with the Rotary Club of Columbus and serves on the Board of United Way of the Chattahoochee Valley as well as her local Girl Scouts and Better Business Bureau. She participates in fund raising

for scholarships at Columbus State University and will be chairing "CSU Day" in 2005 for the university. Sheree played a key role in opening the Columbus One Stop Business Shop, a business development center that provides start-up assistance to area entrepreneurs.

In 1998, Sheree received the "Blue Chip" award from Mass-Mutual, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and Nation's Business Magazine which is published by the U.S. Chamber.

This is Georgia's Second National Small Business winner. The first was Larry Comer, President of Metaluz Corp. in 1977. South Florida is notable for nominating Joann R. Shultz, President of DRG, Inc. in 1991 who was the first woman selected as small business person of the year. Alabama also had a national small business winner in 2001, Thornton Stanley, President of Stanley Construction, Co.

### Past Region IV National Awardees

**1977**

#### **Small Business Person**

Larry Comer  
Metaluz Corp.  
Americus, Georgia

**1984**

#### **Veteran Advocate**

Andrew Farris  
Farris/SIMS & Co.  
Atlanta, Georgia

**1991**

#### **Small Business Person**

Joann R. Schultz  
DRG, Inc.  
St. Petersburg, Florida

**1992**

#### **Veteran Advocate**

William Cary, Jr.  
Corp. Resources Dev.,  
Atlanta, Georgia

**1997**

#### **Accountant Advocate**

Fern Shubert, CPA  
Marshville, NC

**1997**

#### **Minority Advocate**

William McCullough  
McHenry Associates  
Charlotte, NC

**2001**

#### **Small Business Person**

Thornton Stanley  
Stanley Construction Co  
Huntsville, Alabama

**2001**

#### **Small Business 3<sup>rd</sup>**

**Runner Up**  
Brindley Pieters  
Brindley Pieters & Asso  
Altamonte, Florida

**2001**

#### **Journalist Advocate**

Jeffery Zbar  
Freelance Writer  
Coral Springs, Florida

**2002**

#### **Small Business 3<sup>rd</sup>**

**Runner Up**  
Mildred Council  
Mama Dip's Kitchen  
Chapel Hill, NC

**2002**

#### **Journalist Advocate**

Jim Blasingame  
The Small Business  
Advocate  
Florence, Alabama

**2003**

#### **Small Business 1<sup>st</sup>**

**Runner Up**  
Paula H. Deen  
Lady and Sons  
Restaurant  
Savannah, Georgia

**2004**

#### **Small Business Person**

Sheree Mitchell  
The Growing Room, Inc  
Columbus, Georgia

# PHOTO FILE



North Carolina



**Above:** Nuby Fower and NC DD Lee Cornelison meet with lenders in Raleigh.  
**Below:** Congressman Richard Burr, Nuby Fower and Lee Cornelison present a certification of appreciation to Gayle Anderson, President & CEO of the Winston Salem Chamber following a Heath Savings Account Roundtable.

Georgia



**Above:** GA DD Terri Denison and GA Governor Sonny Perdue with National Small Business of the Year winner Sheree Mitchell.  
**Below,** Jorge Valentine Stone and Annette Rodriguez staff an information table in the food court of Peachtree Center Plaza in downtown Atlanta.

Alabama



**Above:** Alabama DO welcomes new DD Mike Ricks.  
**Left:** Alabama DO holds a very successful procurement matchmaking event.



**Got a shot to share,**  
 Send it to [david.perry@sba.gov](mailto:david.perry@sba.gov)  
 along with a description of the picture.

South Carolina



**Above and Left:** Nuby Fowler, SC DD Elliott Cooper and DDD Theresa Singleton joined SC Governor Mark Sanford for a small business event in Columbia.



**Photo Submissions by:**  
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